

---

# MCC Laws of Cricket

Re-draft consultation paper  
for 2017 Code

---



**LORD'S**  
THE HOME OF CRICKET

# Introduction

**MCC is undertaking a thorough review of the Laws of Cricket, with a view to a new Code of Laws being written in time for implementation on 1st October 2017.**

Listed below are some specific areas that MCC is looking at in close detail. Next to each topic, we have outlined the arguments for and against a change to the Law, together with the MCC Laws sub-committee's opinion on the matter.

Your opinions on these areas are important to MCC and it would be appreciated if you could feed back your comments and suggestions, via the separate response page which you should have received with this document.

## Preamble to the Laws

*The Preamble to the Laws was written to illuminate, rather than to define, the notion of 'the Spirit of Cricket'. It does not set out precise instructions, but sets out to describe a philosophy for playing the game which if followed, will both contribute to the enjoyment of players, officials and spectators, and uphold the status of the game itself. MCC are currently assessing whether it is still fit for purpose and whether or not it needs to be rewritten, and if so whether it should be enlarged or simplified.*

### Does the Spirit of Cricket as currently written need to be changed? If so should it be enlarged or simplified?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
Written some time ago, and needs to be rewritten to be more relevant to the modern game.	It serves an important purpose in setting standards for players to adhere to and for umpires to be able to uphold.	The Spirit of Cricket needs to be re-evaluated so that it is fit for purpose, clear, relevant and easily understood.
Needs to be written in more straightforward language to make it accessible to all.		
Some feel that it is no longer relevant and that it should either be removed or distilled into shorter basic principles of fair play.	At a time when player indiscipline appears to be increasingly prevalent, it would give the wrong impression if it were abandoned or significantly shortened.	It would be wrong to remove or diminish the Spirit of Cricket.
Listing specific unacceptable behaviours might be more appropriate in Law 42.18 (Players' conduct), and could be expanded. The Spirit of Cricket could be embedded in this Law rather than be a Preamble to the Laws.	Listing specific unacceptable behaviours is helpful to umpires in tackling these situations.	Players' misconduct is a major issue, and the structure and content of Law 42.18 (Players' conduct) needs re-evaluating (see below).

## Switch hit and Reverse sweep

*The Switch Hit and Reverse Sweep have become increasingly prevalent in the modern game. Some have argued that the shots may not be in the spirit of the game, and that Laws such as LBW and Wide could be changed to make them higher risk shots. There is currently nothing in the Laws that defines them or legislates against them.*

### Is it desirable or workable to legislate for or against these shots in any way, or to adapt the Laws to take account of them?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
The bowler has to declare his mode of delivery, whilst the batsman can change his orientation, which to some appears unfair.	Unrealistic to ban either shot now, since they have become accepted as part of the game, and they require high levels of skill.	The striker should declare which side is the leg side if there is any doubt from his stance.
LBW law should be changed so that the striker loses protection of the leg side when playing either shot, so that there is no restriction on where the ball pitches.	Difficulty of defining either stroke with sufficient precision if the Law is to be changed. Umpires have strongly advised that they cannot be expected to differentiate hand movement in addition to the other things they are watching.	The shots should not be banned. LBW law should not change to take account of them.
The strict interpretation of leg-side wides in limited overs cricket is unfair to the bowler when the switch hit is played.	The Wide Law adequately covers the situation for 'time' cricket and can be referenced in playing regulations.	The strict interpretation of leg-side wides in limited overs cricket should not apply when either shot is played to give the bowler more leeway.
Potential stalemate/time wasting when the batsman moves to switch hit early and the bowler refuses to release the ball.	Stalemate/time wasting can be dealt with under existing Laws 42.9 & 10 (Time wasting by the fielding/batting side).	The bowler is entitled to stop when he sees the batsman making a switch. Any time wasting can be dealt with under existing Laws.

## Limited Overs Cricket

*There is very little mention of the limited overs game and its special playing regulations in the Laws of Cricket. The vast majority of matches played around the world is limited overs cricket.*

### Would it be sensible to give greater recognition to limited overs cricket in the Laws?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
The vast majority of cricket played around the world is in limited overs format. The number of 'time' games is steadily declining in the recreational game.	The current ICC playing regulations for limited overs cricket go to great length, and show just how detailed they have to be to cover all potential scenarios.	It would be desirable to make the Laws more relevant to the majority of cricket that is played, and to bring them up to date with current practice.
The Laws are written for 'time' cricket and make virtually no reference to limited overs cricket, which is played with a large number of additional playing regulations.	Different lengths of games and different competitions have widely different playing regulations. It would be difficult to produce generic regulations to cover every eventuality.	A set of draft generic limited overs cricket playing regulations should be produced for general consultation and discussion as a starting point. This is likely to be considerably easier than changing the Laws themselves.
The Laws should reflect the type of matches people are playing and will be playing in the future. It is an opportunity for MCC to update the Laws to reflect current practice worldwide.	Incorporating limited overs playing conditions into the Laws themselves would be extremely complicated and time consuming.	The production of a separate booklet with generic regulations as well as specific regulations for T20 and 50 overs matches may also be a possibility.
To retain credibility, generic regulations need to be written to cover the areas which the Laws do not, both as a point of reference and as a suggested list of regulations to choose from in any single match.		

## Law 2.5 Fielder absent or leaving the field

*If a fielder is absent for a period of more than 15 minutes, the current Law restricts when he may come on to bowl when he returns to the field of play. There is no restriction on when he can bat if, for instance, a fielder has missed the whole of his side's fielding session. Some feel that if a player has any unexpired 'penance time' at the end of a fielding session, then he should not be allowed to bat until it is expired. This restriction is already in place in the professional game.*

### Should there be a restriction on when a player can bat, if he has been absent in the field?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
The Law currently imposes a restriction upon when a player, who has been absent in the field, can bowl. It seems reasonable to extend this to when he can bat if he has not served his 'penance time' by the end of his side's fielding period.	Absence from fielding should only carry a penalty during the fielding period as the current Law provides. It is unreasonable to penalise a side when it is batting for a fielding absence.	The Law should be redrafted to include a restriction on when a player, who has been absent from fielding, can bat.
In the professional game there is a regulation which bars a player from batting until his 'penance time' has elapsed (up to a maximum of 2 hours), or until 5 wickets have fallen, whichever is earlier; this appears to work well.		The length of time that he should have to wait before he can bat needs to be considered. 90 minutes or at the fall of the 5th wicket, whichever is earlier, is recommended.

## Law 2.7 Runner

*There is currently no restriction in the Laws on the movement of a runner for an injured striker. When the wicket-keeper is standing back to a fast bowler, a runner has sufficient time to run towards the other end after the ball has been delivered, and before the injured striker has played the ball, knowing that if the injured striker misses the ball, he has plenty of time to regain his ground before the wicket-keeper can throw down the stumps.*

### Should the runner for an injured striker be allowed to be further forward than the injured striker's position as the striker plays the delivery?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
In this situation, where the runner runs after the ball is delivered and before the injured striker has played the ball, he is gaining a significant advantage and it makes sense to restrict his position to be no further forward than the injured striker as he plays the ball.	In doing this the runner is still exposing himself to the possibility of being run out. He should be allowed to position himself where he wants.	There is currently no recommendation from MCC on this issue.
The intention would be that no runs would be allowed from that delivery. Either batsman could be dismissed up to the point when the batsmen had completed the first run. When the ball is dead the umpires would warn the striker and his runner that the action is deemed unfair, and the procedures of Law 42.18 would follow.		

## Law 6 Size and depth of bats

*The balance between bat and ball is a very important feature of cricket. Statistical studies have shown that the balance has shifted in the recent past towards the bat in both Test match and limited overs cricket. Whilst there are several factors which have contributed towards this shift, some argue that the development of larger bats with deeper edges has been a major factor and feel that both the shape and size of bats should be restricted. One possible way of doing this would be a bat gauge through which the entire length of the bat would have to pass.*

### Have the bats become too powerful, so as to skew the balance of the game too much in favour of the batsman?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
There has been a statistically significant increase in the number of boundaries (especially sixes) in international cricket in recent years. The balance between bat and ball appears to have changed.	In international matches the increase in fours and sixes has made the game more entertaining for the majority of spectators, which is a benefit.	Consultation is required on whether the change in balance has been beneficial or detrimental. All of the other factors which have affected this need to be taken into account.
Scientific research has shown that the 'sweet spot' has become larger, and that thick edges travel significantly further as the depth of bats and particularly the edges increase. In particular the aerial 'mis-hit' is more likely to clear the boundary.	There are several other factors, other than increasing bat size, which have affected the balance between bat and ball, such as flatter pitches, shorter boundaries, tighter fielding restrictions and more aggressive batting from stronger batmen.	Consideration could be given to designing a gauge through which the entire length of the bat should pass. This would limit the maximum depth as well as the thickness of the edges. Limiting the weight is possible, but a gauge is likely to be more effective.
There are safety implications for fielders, umpires and non-strikers as the ball is hit harder and travels faster.	Some argue that more catches carry to the fielders now, that would previously have dropped short.	Consideration should be given to the safety of players and umpires.

**Should there be a bat gauge designed to restrict the width, edge depth and maximum depth of bats?**

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
A gauge which restricted width, edge depth and maximum depth would ensure compliance to a defined standard.	It is unrealistic to design a gauge for all bats.	There should be consultation with bat manufacturers to discuss the implications, but a gauge would be the best way of controlling the size and shape of bats.

**If such a gauge were designed, should its dimensions restrict bats to their current size (depth and thickness of edge) or should it reduce their size?**

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
The size and shape of bats has been a key factor in changing the balance between bat and ball, and bats need to be reduced in size with thinner edges.	It is unrealistic to alter the size and shape of bats from their current levels, since spectators are becoming accustomed to more boundaries.	There should be consultation with ICC and other MCC committees as to whether bat size and shape should be altered.



## Law 6.8 Contact with the ball

*Under the existing Law, a batsman can only be caught when the ball hits his glove if it is holding the bat.*

### Should a hand or glove not in contact with the bat count as part of the bat?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
The striker should not have protection from being out Caught if, whilst fending off a rising delivery, the ball strikes his hand which is not touching the bat. The bowler has skilfully induced an error and should get credit.	In certain situations it could intuitively be out (hand just off the bat in reflex to a lifting ball), but also in others it shouldn't (when the hand is a lot further off the bat). It is almost impossible to reconcile the two	There should be no change to this Law because of the difficulty in reconciling every possible case. The principle of the hand or glove having to touch the bat to be defined as the 'bat' should stand.
Umpires would find it easier to adjudicate Caught since they would not need to worry about whether the hand struck by the ball was touching the bat.	If the batsman were to be liable to be out Caught, he should also be able to score runs in this situation, which appears unreasonable if the hand is a long way from the bat.	

*Under the existing Law, a glove that is not holding the bat does not count as part of the bat, despite there being a chain of contact with a glove which is holding the bat.*

### Should a hand or glove not touching the bat, but which is touching the other hand or glove which is in contact with the bat, count as part of the bat as a chain of contact?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
A hand or glove not touching the bat, but which is touching the other hand or glove which is in contact with the bat, forms a chain of contact with the bat. If a ball strikes such a hand it should count in the definition of 'bat', and the striker should therefore be liable to be caught if the ball strikes it.	There are several different situations where a chain of contact is interpreted differently (e.g. boundary fielding as opposed to putting the wicket down). There is no need for a universal principle, and each situation can be defined on its merits.	The Law should remain unchanged, and the principle of the hand or glove having to touch the bat to be defined as the 'bat' should stand.

*'The definition of 'the bat' in Appendix D at present includes 'a glove or hand holding the bat'.*

### Would a change to a hand or glove 'touching', as opposed to 'holding' the bat make a clearer definition of the bat?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
'Touching' the bat describes more clearly what is intended here than 'holding' the bat.		'Touching' should replace 'holding' in the definition of 'the bat' in Appendix D.

## Law 8.4 Length of pitches for junior cricket

*The existing Law specifies the following lengths for pitches in junior cricket:*

Under 9	18 yards
Under 11	20 yards
Under 13	21 yards

### Is there a need to change the lengths of junior cricket pitches?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
Coaches are beginning to question whether the current Law about the lengths of pitches for junior cricket is appropriate.	If, after consultation, the lengths of junior pitches are appropriate, then no change is necessary. There are some safety concerns about fast bowlers on short pitches.	Consult with National Governing Bodies, coaches and schools, and change the recommendations in the Laws accordingly.

*In junior girls' cricket there can be problems with the ball bouncing too often when a full length pitch for that age-group is used. There is currently no distinction between boys' and girls' cricket.*

### Is there a need to differentiate between boys and girls for the length of junior cricket pitches?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
Coaches are pointing out that boys and girls may require different length pitches to be able to bowl properly.	If, after consultation, no distinction needs to be made, then no change is necessary.	Consult with National Governing Bodies, coaches and schools, and change the recommendations in the Laws accordingly.

## Law 11.2 Covering the pitch during the match

*The current Law does not allow the whole pitch to be covered in bad weather; only the bowlers' run ups and area extending no further than 5 feet beyond the popping crease may be covered, unless there is agreement to do so before the match. Many grounds now have full covering available.*

### Should complete covering of the pitch now be allowed and be the minimum standard?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
Wherever possible, conditions should be the same for both sides (especially in limited overs cricket), and complete covering of the pitch would make this more likely. Complete covering is now available at many more grounds.	Complete covering in professional cricket has significantly altered the balance between bat and ball, favouring the batsmen	The law should be redrafted to specify complete covering of the pitch unless agreed otherwise. The argument that conditions should be the same for both sides being paramount.
Complete covering of the pitch makes play more likely to take place.		
Complete covering would update the Law and bring it into line with existing common practice.		



## Law 18.4 Unintentional short runs

*The existing Law requires the umpire to call and signal 'Short run' when a batsman unintentionally runs short as soon as the ball becomes dead. There is the potential for ill-feeling if this were to occur off the last ball of the game, if the short run was to be called after the batting side thought they had won.*

**Should the call of 'short run' be made as the short run occurs, or when the batsmen have crossed on the next run, or should it remain as only being called once the ball is dead?**

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
Assume 2 runs are needed to win from the last ball of a match. The striker hits the ball to a position where 3 runs could easily be run. One batsman accidentally runs one short on the first run, and the batsmen complete the second run thinking that the match is over and that their side has won. The umpire waits until the ball is dead and calls 'Short run'. This would potentially cause chaos and be an unsatisfactory conclusion to the match.	In most cases, if the 'Short run' call were made immediately, then the batsman would simply retrace his steps to avert the one short penalty, although this would make it harder to complete further runs and increase his chances of being run out subsequently. This problem would be addressed if the call were made once the batsmen had crossed on the next run.	There is currently no recommendation from MCC on this issue.
If the call of 'Short run' was made once the batsmen had crossed on the next run, then both batting and fielding sides would be able to react appropriately.	A batsman is responsible for making his ground adequately; if he fails to do so he deserves to be penalised, whatever the circumstances.	

## Law 19 Boundaries

*The existing Law states that 'no part of any sight-screen shall be within the field of play'. At some grounds, where the sight-screen is within the natural boundary of the ground, an area is roped off around the front of the sight-screen only, so that if the position of the sight-screen changes, so does the roped off area. There is a view that an area should be roped off which takes into account any reasonable position of the sight-screen, so that the boundary does not change when the sight-screen is moved.*

**When a sight-screen is 'inside' the natural boundary of the ground, should the area roped or marked around it move with the screen or should there be a larger area roped off which caters for the position of the sight-screen whichever side of the wicket the ball is delivered?**

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
The boundary should not move during the game. A ball landing in the same place should not be a boundary for one ball and a potential catch for another. The area marked off for the sight-screen should allow for any realistic movement of the sight-screen and should not change.	On small grounds, where this problem often arises, maximising the area of the field of play can be important. Many clubs currently only mark off where the sight-screen is at any one time, and move the marking as the screen moves. What constitutes the boundary can be agreed at the toss and can allow for the boundary moving with the screen.	Law 19.1(b) should be redrafted to specify that the area marked off for the sight-screen should be sufficiently large to cater for its position whichever side of the wicket the ball is delivered. This is in accordance with the principle implied in other sections of Law 19 that the boundary, once defined at the toss, should not change, and that the sight-screen should be entirely outside the boundary.

## Law 19 Boundaries

*When the agreed boundary is marked by a rope, it can be displaced by a fielder in the act of fielding the ball, and is sometimes not returned to its original position. Clarification is required as to what constitutes the actual boundary when this occurs.*

**If the boundary rope has been moved, either in the act of fielding when the rope is moved, or for subsequent deliveries when the rope has not been replaced to its original position, should the boundary be determined by its original position?**

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
The boundary should not move during the game, and so its original position, as determined at the toss, should define it at all times. Any displaced rope should be returned to its original position for the following delivery. This should be the principle whichever direction the rope is displaced.	Potential difficulty for umpires judging where the rope originally was if the act of fielding moves the rope.	Law 19.2(e) should be redrafted to take account of the principle that the boundary is defined by its original position in the situation where a rope marking it is displaced in any direction. The rope should also be replaced to its original position immediately.

## Law 23.4 Umpire calling 'Dead ball'

*There is currently no existing Law to deal with the situation where the bowler pauses during his delivery stride before releasing the ball. The ICC Umpires' Almanac includes a guideline to international umpires as stated below in 'reasons for change'.*

**Should there be any limit on the length of a delay in a bowler's action in delivering the ball once he has entered his delivery stride?**

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
Anything other than a momentary delay in delivering the ball becomes an unfair distraction to the striker.	The bowler is entitled to deliver the ball with any action provided that he doesn't throw the ball or bowl underarm. It is the batsman's responsibility to play the ball whenever it is delivered. Batsmen are allowed to switch hit and reverse sweep, so this tactic should be permitted to allow the bowlers some advantage.	Specifying a time limit on the delay is impractical. The Law should not be changed to incorporate this situation.
When the umpires feel that a bowler is deliberately using this tactic unfairly to distract a batsman they should call 'Dead ball'.	Difficult to specify the length of a delay in Law.	The umpires should use their judgement to decide whether any delay is excessive, and call 'Dead ball' if they think it is.

## Laws 24 & 25 No ball and Wide ball

*The Law currently requires an additional delivery to be bowled for each No ball or Wide in an over. Some feel that the batting side should be allowed to choose whether or not these extra deliveries are bowled.*

**Should the batting side be able to choose whether or not there is an extra delivery after a No ball or Wide has been bowled?**

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
When playing out time for a draw, the batting side does not want the bowling side to have an extra delivery to attempt to take a wicket.	The Laws state that there must be 6 valid balls in an over.	The Law should not be changed since the principle of there being 6 valid balls in an over is an overriding one.
The additional delivery is intended as a penalty to the bowling side, so there is an element of fairness in allowing the batting side the chance to decline it if they wish.	This is too rare a situation to warrant a change.	

## Laws 24.1(b) Underarm bowling & 24.2 Fair delivery - the arm

*The existing Law states that 'underarm bowling shall not be permitted', but there is no penalty for such deliveries. There is a view that the penalties for 'underarm bowling' should be equivalent to those for a delivery that is thrown.*

### Should the Law incorporate a penalty for underarm bowling?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
If 'underarm bowling' is not allowed, there should be a penalty for such bowling within the game.	A very rare occurrence which does not require a Law change.	Law 24 should be redrafted so that the penalty for underarm bowling is equivalent to the penalty for a ball that is thrown.
The penalties for underarm bowling should be equivalent to those for a ball that is thrown.	Throwing and underarm bowling are different offences and should have separate penalties.	
Currently there is no definition of what constitutes underarm bowling.		A clear definition of 'underarm bowling' should be added to Appendix D.

*The existing Law provides for a first, and then second and final warning before the bowler is suspended for the rest of the innings.*

### Should the second warning for a ball that is thrown be dispensed with?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
Throwing the ball is undesirable, and after an official first and final warning, the bowler should be suspended for a subsequent offence immediately.	If the throwing is involuntary, removing a second and final warning is unnecessarily harsh.	There should be a first and final warning on the first instance of a thrown delivery, and a subsequent occurrence should result in the immediate suspension of the bowler.

## Law 24.7 Ball bouncing more than twice

*The current Law states that No ball should be called when a fair delivery bounces for a third time before it reaches the popping crease. ICC and the professional game have a special regulation that it is a No ball when the ball bounces for a second time, and many recreational cricket competitions have now encompassed this condition.*

### Should this change to bouncing more than once?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
After deliberate bowling of double bouncers in professional cricket, the playing regulations were changed to No ball once the ball bounced more than once.	It may be excessive for junior cricket where double bouncing deliveries can be prevalent.	The Law should be redrafted so that 'twice' is replaced by 'once'.
This has been incorporated by the upper levels of the recreational game, and it makes sense to update to current practice.		Consideration could be given for a special regulation for junior cricket.
Double bouncing deliveries are not an intended part of the game, are an undesirable spectacle and should be penalised.		

## Law 24.11 No ball to override Wide

*There is a one run penalty when either a No ball or Wide is bowled separately; once a delivery is a No ball, it cannot subsequently be called a Wide. Some feel that if a delivery is both a No ball and satisfies the conditions for a Wide there should be a two run penalty.*

### Should a No ball which would otherwise have been a Wide incur an additional one run penalty?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
If the No ball would also have been a Wide, the bowling side should incur the penalty for both.	The batsman is only entitled to receive 6 valid balls in an over. A No ball is not a valid ball.	The Law should not be changed, since the only right that the batsman has is to receive 6 valid balls.
If a No ball is not a Wide, the striker has the opportunity to score additional runs, whereas if it is wide, he is denied that chance.	The law is not about missed scoring opportunities, it concerns the batsman's right to receive 6 valid deliveries.	
In limited overs cricket especially, this could significantly affect the result.	The penalty for a No ball or Wide is to provide a disincentive for bowling them	

## Law 26 Byes and Leg Byes

*The current Law allows leg byes if the striker has attempted to play the ball with the bat or has tried to avoid being hit by the ball. Some feel that leg byes should not be allowed when a batsman takes evasive action and is not attempting a stroke.*

### Should leg-byes be allowed if the striker has taken evasive action?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
Evasive action is different from attempting to hit the ball. The skill of the bowler has prompted evasive action and the batsman has inadvertently been hit.	Changing the Law is likely to result in increasing the occurrence of short-pitched deliveries, since leg byes will no longer result.	The Law should not be changed because of the likelihood of an increased number of short-pitched deliveries.
The batting side should not benefit from the skilful action of a bowler. Leg byes should only be allowed when the batsman has attempted to play the ball.	The short-pitched delivery would become a defensive weapon especially against lesser batsmen, since leg byes could only be scored if the striker had attempted a stroke.	

## Law 29.1(b) When out of his ground

*The Law was recently changed to protect a batsman, who had grounded his foot beyond the popping crease, from being Run out when, whilst continuing his forward momentum, he subsequently loses contact with the ground with both his person and his bat. Some feel that this principle should be extended to include a batsman who had grounded any part of his bat or person beyond the popping crease. This is particularly for when a diving batsman's bat bounces up after making his ground.*

### Should the principle already established for the batsmen's feet be extended to their bat and/or their person?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
It seems unfair and inconsistent with the existing Law 29.1(b), if the batsman has continued forward momentum and has grounded his bat beyond the edge of the popping crease in making good his ground, that he is deemed out of his ground because no part of his bat or person is subsequently not touching the ground after contact has already been made.	Losing contact between both feet and the ground is an inevitable consequence of running, whereas losing contact between the bat and the ground is avoidable, and hence the latter is an entirely different situation. It is a fundamental principle that the bat should be grounded beyond the popping crease for a batsman to be within his ground if no part of his person is so grounded.	Laws Sub-committee is currently divided on this issue.
It would be an anachronism to differentiate between these two situations; players, commentators and spectators would find it illogical and confusing if there were not a consistent principle. Umpires would find it easier to adjudicate Run out.	There are potential difficulties rationalising this Law with Stumped, so that it is clear what is 'out' and 'not out' in different situations.	If it is decided to proceed, there should be a single Law to cover Run out and Stumped. Considerable care would be needed to clarify what would be out in different stumping scenarios.

## Law 29.1 Possible Redraft

*After consultation with ICC, MCC has decided not to 'fast-track' this potential change to the Law, but it is still under consideration for the 2017 Code.*

### If it were to be decided to change the Law to include the bat and batsman's person, this is a possible redraft of it. Please comment on its suitability and whether it would be fit for purpose.

(a) A batsman shall be considered to be out of his ground unless his bat or some part of his person is grounded behind the popping crease at that end.

(b) Notwithstanding (a) above, if a batsman who, in running or diving to a wicket and beyond, and having grounded some part of his person or bat beyond the popping crease, continues the same movement, then any subsequent loss of contact with the ground with any part of his person or bat during his continued forward momentum, shall not be interpreted as being out of his ground.

## Laws 33 & 37 Handled the ball & Obstructing the Field

A 2013 law change has restricted the Handled the ball dismissal to 'the act of playing the ball' which includes 'striking the ball more than once in defence of the wicket'. It has been suggested that it would be simpler to combine Obstructing the field and Handled the ball into a single dismissal, thus simplifying the Laws.

### Is there an argument for combining these dismissals into a single one?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
Combining them would significantly simplify the Law in this area, make these dismissals much easier to teach and would improve clarity.	It would remove a dismissal from the Laws which has always been there, and reduce the number of Laws.	It is recommended that the Laws should be redrafted to combine the two dismissals into a single Law: Obstructing the Field, but higher Committees would need to be consulted first.

### Should the bowler get credit for Handled the ball if the two dismissals remain separate?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
Now that Handled the ball is restricted to the moment of receiving the delivery, it is more likely to be a result of the bowler's skill.	It is possible that the striker would deliberately handle the ball in a situation which was not due to the bowler's skill.	The Law should not change as regards the bowler getting credit for Handled the Ball.

## Law 40.4 Movement by wicket-keeper

Existing Laws 41.7 & 40.4 deal with restrictions on the movement of the wicket-keeper. It has been decided to incorporate such restrictions into a single Law, which would maintain the thrust of the existing Law whilst adding three further principles outlined below.

### Do you consider that the redrafted Law is sufficient and fit for purpose?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
A wicket-keeper, having taken position on the off side, should not be able to move sideways to the leg side, thereby deceiving the striker, before the release of the ball.	The practice of the wicket-keeper moving to the leg side early has been a ploy to attempt a stumping throughout the history of cricket and should be allowed.	The practice of the wicket-keeper moving to the leg-side before the release of the ball qualifies as deception of the striker and should not be allowed, thereby becoming consistent with deception by another fielder.
The wicket-keeper should be able to move in the same way as other fielders in response to the striker's movement, provided that he does not contravene Law 40.3 (Position of wicket-keeper).	Any significant movement of the wicket-keeper, other than moving up towards the stumps for a slower delivery, before the ball reaches the striker should be illegal, and he should not be able to move in anticipation of a stroke.	The wicket-keeper should be able to move in the same way as other fielders in response to the striker's movement, provided that he does not contravene Law 40.3 (Position of wicket-keeper).
A wicket-keeper should not be able to move forward for a slower ball in such a way that it brings him within reach of the stumps for a stumping.	The striker should be aware of the risk of being Stumped if the wicket-keeper is only a couple of yards behind the stumps.	A wicket-keeper should not be able to move forward for a slower ball in such a way that it brings him within reach of the stumps for a stumping.
A more precise definition of how a wicket-keeper can move is now necessary if he is no longer included in Law 41.7 Movement of a fielder.		Law 40.4 should be redrafted to retain the thrust of the existing Law, but to incorporate the three principles outlined immediately above.

## Law 40.4 Proposed Redraft

MCC has decided to redraft this Law so that all restrictions on the movement of the wicket-keeper are contained within this Law. It will come into effect on 1st September 2015, and the proposed redraft is:

### Movement by wicket-keeper

After the ball comes into play and before it reaches the striker, it is unfair if the wicket-keeper significantly alters his position in relation to the striker's wicket, except for the following:

- (i) movement of a few paces forward for a slower delivery unless in so doing it brings him within reach of the wicket.
- (ii) lateral movement in response to the direction in which the ball has been delivered.
- (iii) movement in response to the stroke that the striker is playing or that his actions suggest that he intends to play. However, the provisions of Law 40.3 (*Position of wicket-keeper*) shall apply.

In the event of unfair movement by the wicket-keeper, either umpire shall call and signal Dead ball.

## Law 41.7 & 8 Movement by fielders & Significant movement

*The existing Laws restrict the movement of a fielder (including the wicket-keeper) to 'walking in' for outfielders and nothing other than 'minor adjustments to stance or position' for close fielders until the ball reaches the striker. As shots such as the switch hit or reverse sweep have evolved, some feel that if the batsman alters his position, so the fielders should be allowed to alter their positions in response. It was also felt appropriate that restrictions on the movement of the wicket-keeper should be dealt with entirely in Law 40.4.*

### Do you consider that the redrafted Law is sufficient and fit for purpose?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
In the age of the 'switch hit', 'reverse sweep' and 'paddle sweep', the striker can move into position before the bowler releases the ball. The fielders should be allowed to adjust their position according to the striker's movements and in reaction to the shot he is shaping to play.	Any significant movement of a fielder before the ball reaches the striker, other than 'walking in', should be illegal, and the fielder should not be able to move in anticipation of a stroke.	Law 41.7 should be redrafted to retain the thrust of the existing Law as far as 'deception' is concerned, but to allow intelligent movement in reaction to the striker's actions.
The current law is designed to prevent movement of a fielder that is likely to deceive the batsman, which is desirable. Intelligent movement which is in response to the striker's intended shot is acceptable and has been common practice throughout the game's history.	Umpires may find it difficult to distinguish between the two different types of movement - 'deception' and 'anticipation'.	The striker should have protection against significant movement of a fielder until the point that he begins movement for the stroke he intends to play. Thereafter the fielders should be able to move in anticipation of his stroke.
The Law should define what is and what is not acceptable movement and when it may occur more clearly.	There could be potential abuse by the fielding side if the batsman moves his position before the release of the ball.	Further debate may be necessary to determine when the fielding side should be able to move if the striker moves before the release of the ball.



## Law 41.7 & 8 Movement by fielders & Significant movement

*There is some debate as to when a fielder should be able to move if the striker alters his position (switch hit or stepping across to the off side for instance) before the bowler has released the ball. The options are either 'as the striker first alters his position' or 'as the bowler enters his delivery stride'.*

### If the striker alters his position before the bowler has released the ball, should a fielder be able to move as the striker first alters his position or as the bowler enters his delivery stride?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
Those who argue for 'as the striker first alters his position' say that it is only fair that the fielders should be able to move immediately in response to the movement of a batsman. As a result, there would be an incentive for the batsman to delay his movement as late as possible so that the fielders could not move far. The bowler can also not release the ball if the striker moves very early.	Those who argue for 'as the bowler enters his delivery stride' say that if the alternative were adopted, when a fast bowler is bowling, there is the potential for excessive fielder movement and chaos. Umpires would find fielder movement much easier to control if the 'delivery stride' option were adopted. The current ICC playing regulation stipulates 'once the bowler has entered the delivery stride'.	In the case where the striker alters his position before the bowler delivers the ball, please specify a preference between allowed movement by a fielder in response to a stroke 'as the striker alters his position' or 'as the bowler enters his delivery stride'. If the latter were to be adopted ultimately, the alternative clause (iii) which would replace the proposed redraft is also shown below.

## Law 41.7 Proposed Redraft

*MCC has decided to redraft this Law so that all restrictions on the movement of the wicket-keeper are contained within this Law. It will come into effect on 1st September 2015, and the proposed redraft is:*

### Movement by any fielder other than the wicket-keeper

Any movement by any fielder, excluding the wicket-keeper, after the ball comes into play and before the ball reaches the striker, is unfair except for the following:

- (i) minor adjustments to stance or position in relation to the striker's wicket.
- (ii) movement by any fielder, other than a close fielder, towards the striker or the striker's wicket that does not significantly alter the position of the fielder.
- (iii) movement by any fielder in response to the stroke that the striker is playing or that his actions suggest he intends to play.

Notwithstanding (iii) above, in all circumstances Law 41.5 (*Limitation of on side fielders*) shall apply.

In the event of such unfair movement, either umpire shall call and signal Dead ball as soon as possible after the delivery of the ball.

Note also the provisions of Law 42.4 (*Deliberate attempt to distract striker*).

See also Law 40.4 (*Movement by wicket-keeper*).

**DELETE Law 41.8 (*Definition of significant movement*).**

*If 'as the bowler enters his delivery stride' were to be adopted in due course, then clause (iii) would read*

- (iii) movement by any fielder, after the bowler has entered his delivery stride, in response to the stroke that the striker is playing or that his actions suggest he intends to play.

## Law 42.5 Deliberate distraction or obstruction of a batsman

*The practice of a fielder feigning to have and/or throw the ball ('mock fielding'), attempting to deceive the batsmen into refusing an additional run has become increasingly prevalent. Some feel that this is an unfair deception and should be prohibited.*

### Should 'mock fielding' be specifically disallowed in the Laws?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
MCC and ICC have previously discussed this practice and deemed it to be unfair, without specifically barring its usage in Law. This appears not to have been understood beyond the professional arena.	Law 42.5 implicitly covers this practice and so there is no need to adjust the Law. It is the responsibility of the umpires to interpret and act upon the Law in this situation.	The title of Law 42.5 should be redrafted to 'distraction, deception or obstruction of a batsman', and the Law itself to 'distract, deceive or obstruct a batsman'.
It would provide clarity if the Law included a specific reference to 'mock fielding', and it would help umpires to deal with it, since it has become increasingly prevalent in the recreational game.		'Mock fielding' should be a specific example of 'deception' in explanatory materials, e.g. <i>Tom Smith's</i> . 'Mock fielding' would therefore incur an immediate 5 run penalty with all the sanctions of 42.5 on first offence.

## Law 42.6(b) Bowling of high full pitched balls

*The current Law makes a distinction between 'slow' and 'non slow' deliveries as to the critical height above which No ball is called when a high full toss is delivered. For 'slow' deliveries it is the shoulder, and for 'non slow' deliveries it is the waist. Some feel that it would be simpler to define one critical height for all deliveries.*

### Should a distinction be made between 'slow' and 'non-slow' deliveries, and if not, should all deliveries over waist height be called No ball?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
It can be difficult for umpires to identify a 'slow ball'; for instance when a spinner bowls a quicker ball or a medium pacer bowls a slower ball.	A change would provide less leeway when young slow bowlers are learning the game, although the Laws need to apply to all levels.	The Law should be redrafted so that waist height should apply for all bowlers. A clear definition of 'waist' height should be written in Appendix D.
Most limited overs regulations define a single height for all bowlers, so a change would bring the Law in accordance with current practice.	It may be excessive if slow bowlers are cautioned if 'waist' height becomes the only level.	A slow bowler should be subject to the provisions of Law 42.7 (Action by umpire) if he bowls a high full-toss, since such deliveries need to be discouraged.
It makes sense to change for simplicity and clarity, and a definition of the exact height would be helpful, since umpires interpret 'waist' height in different ways.		Consideration could be given for a special regulation providing more leeway in junior cricket.

*The Oxford English Dictionary defines the 'waist' as 'the area between the hip and the lower rib'. Therefore 'above waist height' means above the lower rib.*

### Would 'hip' be a more appropriate word to define the critical height?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
Many cricketers and umpires, when asked to point to the appropriate height for the high full toss will point to hip height, around the level of the belt. Some however insist that it should be 'above the lower rib' since that is the definition of 'waist height'. It makes sense to change the wording, replacing 'waist' by 'hip' so that there is no doubt about its meaning.	Many people understand 'above waist height' to mean 'above the belt' so there is no need to change the Law.	There is currently no recommendation from MCC on the issue of how to define the critical height for the high full toss, but MCC would appreciate a response to both questions.

## Law 42.6(b) Bowling of high full pitched balls

*Umpires currently have to judge the critical level as 'above waist height of the striker if he were standing upright at the popping crease'.*

### Should 'above the height of the stumps' be used as the critical height?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
An alternative suggestion is to use the 'top of the stumps' as the critical height. Its supporters argue that it has the advantage of being a stationary object and defines an absolute height in all cases.	Using the 'top of the stumps' takes no account of the height of the batsman facing the delivery, and this should be a significant factor in judging a No ball. It would also significantly lower the critical height which would be unnecessarily harsh on the bowlers.	Preference was towards using a part of the body, rather than the height of the stumps, as this would take into account the height of the striker and hence the potential danger of the delivery.

## Law 42.15 Bowler attempting to run out non-striker before delivery.

*The existing Law states that a bowler may not attempt to run out a non-striker 'once he has entered his delivery stride'. The current ICC playing regulation states that he may not do so 'once he has completed his delivery swing'. In limited overs cricket or in close finishes, there is an increasing frequency of non-strikers taking advantage of the existing Law and leaving their ground early.*

### Should the latest time for attempting the run out change from 'before entering his delivery stride' to 'before the bowler would have delivered the ball in his normal action'?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
Under the existing Law, non-strikers are able to leave their ground too early and gain an unfair advantage. This is especially prevalent in limited overs matches or in a close finish. 'Delivery stride' gives the bowler little chance to affect a run out in these circumstances.	The existing Law makes this mode of dismissal extremely rare and, if the Law changes, it is likely to increase its frequency.	The prevalence of non-strikers stealing ground needs to be checked. The Law should change to 'before the bowler would have delivered the ball in his normal action' to restrict the movement of the non-striker. The bowler needs to be able to run out the non-striker later than when he 'enters his delivery stride'.
This is consistent with ICC's rules, which would create more clarity.		The onus should be on the non-striker to remain in his ground until the ball has been released.
Delaying the latest time to the 'release of the ball' will give the bowler more of a chance to achieve a run out and will encourage non-strikers to remain within their ground up to this point.	Umpires will have to judge when the moment of release would have been, instead of a clear moment under the existing law, which may be harder for them.	

## Law 42.18 Players' conduct

*Whilst there are many offences for which 5 penalty runs may be incurred in the Laws, there is currently no penalty within the game for players' misconduct (Law 42.18) or unfair play (Law 42.2). The harshest penalty that the umpires may impose is to report the offence/incident to the Governing Body. It is generally accepted that players' misconduct is on the increase, and so some feel that the umpires need to be armed with a penalty within the game to assist them in ensuring that the game is conducted in a fair and well behaved manner.*

### Should the Laws clamp down further on player misconduct, and is five penalty runs the appropriate sanction?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
Clear indication that players' misconduct is on the increase. This is especially true in recreational cricket.	The current wording of Law 42.18 should be sufficient for the umpires to control the game.	There is a need for an effective deterrent/sanction within the game to deal with players' misconduct.
Reporting any misbehaviour to the captain and asking him to act is important, but does not always have the desired effect.	Umpires should not be able apply sanctions within the game 'on their own behalf'.	'Red/yellow' cards or a 'sinbin' are a step too far and inappropriate for cricket at this time.
There needs to be a sanction within the game itself rather than just reporting after the event, thereby giving more teeth to umpires who are prepared to act at the time of the incident involving indiscipline.	If a game is being umpired by the players then the incident involving misconduct may be inflamed by further disciplinary powers and/or their use of any further sanction might be deemed inappropriate.	Law 42.18 should be redrafted so that a clear warning sequence should be stated, but if the captain fails to change the inappropriate behaviour of his players as a result, then his side would incur a five run penalty with full reporting.
Consideration could be given to using 'red/yellow' cards or a 'sinbin' policy which would act as an effective deterrent. Alternatively five penalty runs might be a more appropriate sanction.	'Red/yellow' cards or a 'sinbin' are an over-reaction in a cricketing context and should not be necessary.	It is intended that this sanction should be a deterrent and only applied when the behaviour of the players continues to be unacceptable after the stated warnings.

### Should there be two separate warnings before penalty runs are incurred or should there be a first and final warning?

Reasons for change	Reasons for no change	MCC Laws sub-committee recommendation
Penalty runs are intended as a deterrent, and should only be incurred after a captain has had two opportunities to change his side's behaviour, especially since the warnings would last for the whole match.	Once one formal warning is given, the offence is bound to be serious. If the captain and his side do not respond effectively, then penalty runs would be deserved for any subsequent offence.	Given the severity of the incident, a first and final warning is the appropriate response, with penalty runs resulting thereafter. It is felt that even the warning should be included in a post match report.





Marylebone Cricket Club, Lord's Ground, London, NW8 8QN

Photographs by: © Matt Bright, Getty Images